FEB 1973

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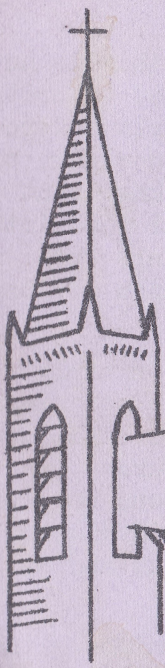

The MESSENGER

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

St. Stephen's, Milnrow & Littleborough

Besses o' th' Barn
February 1973

Dear Friends,

Don't let the heading startle you, this is no permenent take-over, but I have been asked to write this letter as your newly appointed Interim Moderator. I cannot pretend to any intimate knowledge of your fellowship or its situation, but I know that one or two family links exist between our districts, if not our congregations, and my car brings both Littleborough and Milnrow within easy reach so long as the weather stays mild.

I'm sorry that your first hopes of an early settlement have been deferred, but we are not simply looking for a minister (any more than the candidates who come should just be looking for a church), we are looking for the right minister, the one we are able to accept as God's minister for us in Milnrow and district. That such a minister exists and will be found by God's grace I do not doubt.

Two items of news are receiving prominence in Press and Radio this morning. The Prime Minister's announcement of the second phase of his incomes policy, and the proposals outlined by the Archbishop of York for official conversations to begin between all the English Churches to consider what an acceptable basis for union between them might involve.

The Archbishop's plan is as yet unofficial, but it envisages that representatives of the denominations will be asked to consider the possibilities of a multilateral organic union and be prepared to report back to their Churches in 1974. The challenge to be for Christ rather than for a particular group is increasingly upon us in these days.

Mr. Heath's plan is official and much more detailed. I have no intention of taking sides in the partisan discussions that are likely to follow, but it does seem to me that though this plan is

unlikely to please everyone it is an improvement on what was previously suggested and as an interim measure holds out some hope for the future. For this reason it is my sincere hope that our efforts will be directed to improving its deficiencies and that no one will set themselves simply to block it. Somewhere along the line we must look beyond our own needs and the needs of our group to the welfare of the whole community. Our own welfare depends upon it.

I am sorry if anyone feels that I have strayed beyond my brief, but ours is not simply a spiritual or other worldly hope and I make no apology for going on to say that our most important task is the maintenance of our own fellowship as a Christian fellowship. Of course it needs our material support, but even more it needs our presence (the constant assurance of our continuing concern), and above all it needs our prayers. I mean that it needs us to take time regularly to think about our church, about its problems (and of Jesus power to overcome them), and about its task, its reason for existence now and in the future. How can folk today be made aware, and more aware, of the free, the absolutely unconditional nature of God's love? It is through private wrestling that our public prayers and practice gain power.

God bless you all,

Robert A.C. West

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"If every church member was just like me,
What kind of a church would this church be?"

.....A church porch notice in the Potteries. Quoted by Rev. Wm. Purvis at evening service 7/1/73.

ST. STEPHEN'S ON SCREEN

Do you remember the "Care Scheme Slides"? They were a collection of slides Rev. Glyn Jenkins and Mr. Harry Mellor prepared in order to explain the Care Scheme to various house groups. They were generally praised by all who saw them for their near professional approach and the clear way in which they stressed the Christian's positive contribution to our local community.

Whether you saw that excellent series or not I would urge you to make sure that you see the new series, which the Elders and Junior Church Staff have recently been allowed to preview.

Technically they are a major improvement on the already high standard achieved by their predecessors. Harry Mellor's slides are consistently good; occasionally moving and sometimes exquisite. The amount of thought he has put into this project cannot be understood by those of us who just take holiday snaps, and the intensity of his enthusiasm is beyond those of us who have never risen at 4 am., to catch a sunrise over Milnrow. (A sun, which incidentally, on that day did not appear until ten o'clock, but our man got it! The commentary is also excellent and carries all the familiar trade marks of Glyn Jenkins; lucid and poetic explanation cleverly punctuated with a wide ranging and imaginative choice of music.

Lest I be accused of sycophancy let me make a critical remark about this series in comparison with its predecessor. In a single phrase:"Not so much the Care Slides, more our way of life." That is to say that this series shows a community and points out that there are Christians in it, whereas its predecessor put the emphasis on what Christians ought to be doing in that community. There are three possible explanations for this.

My first thought was the rather sad one that perhaps one inevitably loses ones soul as one

becomes more professional, but further thoughts led me in a less pessimistic direction. Perhaps it is significant that Harry designed his slides to fit in with a commentary done by Glyn just before his departure. Could it be that whereas Glyn did the original commentary with his mind on the Care Scheme he did this one in a time of nostalgia for Milnrow.

On the other hand, this might merely reflect my personal impression. I must confess that my mind wandered during the crucial middle section which I found less compelling than either the introduction or the final shots. You must see the slides for yourself and write to tell us whether you have the same reaction or not.

Despite this criticism this series is one that its producers can be proud of and which St.Stephen's can cherish. It will certainly be appreciated by all those who see it and it deserves a very wide audience indeed. As slide shows go this is in a class with the best and compared with some of the material which passes as religious films - well, it knocks them into a cocked hat!

Make it your business to see it and encourage others to do the same.

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FAMILY CHURCH READINGS

Feb. 4th	"All lovely things"	
	Psalm 104:	10 - 12
		27 - 35
11th	"Seek humility"	
	Romans 12:	1 - 8
18th	"Love is kind"	
	1 Corinthians 13:	1 - 13
25th	"Transformation by God's friendship"	
	Romans 12:	9 - 21

WOMEN'S GUILD A.G.M.

22 Ladies attended the A.G.M. of the Women's Guild on Tuesday 4th January.

Much the same committee was elected as last year although a resignation was received from Mrs. C. Rothwell who was Social Secretary. The President, Mrs. E. Gillon, thanked Mrs. Rothwell for her work and Mrs. D. Law was elected to succeed her.

The Officers of the Guild for 1973 are consequently as follows:-

President....	Mrs. E. Gillon
Vice-President	Mrs. M. Howarth
Secretary....	Mrs. C. Clough
Treasurer....	Mrs. P. Royle
Social Secretary...	Mrs. D. Law
Birthday Secretary.	Mrs. M. Mellor
Flower Secretary...	Mrs. E. Gartside
Christmas Cards ...	Mrs. A. Lynch

The next Guild meeting will be on 6th February when the speaker will be Mrs. Ashworth whose topic will be "Genealogy."

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GET WELL SOON

We were sorry to hear that Geoff. Whitworth had to go into hospital but are pleased to say that he is now home again. Mrs. Whitworth wishes to thank all those who offered her transport for visiting the hospital. We hope to see you knocking about again before long, Geoff.

VOCAL REQUEST!!

To those who can sing tolerantly: Why not offer your services for the Choir's Easter presentation? Practices will begin early March and both male and female voices are required - but especially male.

To those who sing interantly: You can help by offering your services as a baby sitter!

Further information available from Mrs. A. Baines.

WOOLLY FOR WILD

Jim Wild thought he was going to a teachers' meeting on Friday 5th January. When he got there he found that the meeting was really a birthday party in his honour given by Junior Church Staff, past and present. Mind you it must have been a bit of a surprise hearing people sing happy birthday when it wasn't his birthday - actually they were a year and a day out in their calculations. Not that it mattered.

Jim probably wondered why he was asked to take the old minute books along to the 'meeting'. They provided half an hour of fascination both for the "old-stagers" and the "youngsters" on the staff. It might be a good idea to reproduce some of these minutes in the Messenger sometime, but for the moment it is sufficient to say that the minutes revealed that Jim has been a member of the staff for no less than half a century. For his present Jim was presented with a pullover, and as you might expect at a party, there was plenty to eat and a birthday cake. Mrs. Nellie Whitehead made a speech on behalf of the former teachers, and Alan Roberts, in his official capacity, spoke of the faithful service which Jim had rendered to the Junior Church, expressing the hope that he would continue as Junior Church secretary and superintendent as long as he was able. There was an added surprise in the shape of Rev. & Mrs. Jenkins who were in Milnrow on a quick visit that week.

The evening went off splendidly and it was a tribute to everybody's self-discipline that Mr.Wild was really taken by surprise. The event had been planned quite a long time before and it is astonishing that nobody let the cat out of the bag.

IT'S THAT MAN AGAIN'

It was nice to see the Jenkins Family on their flying visit to Milnrow recently. They stayed for a couple of nights at Mr. & Mrs. L Whittakers, and managed to meet quite a lot of people in the limited time available. They seem to be enjoying their new environment.

GETTING TO KNOW.....(6)

N I G E R I A

WHERE IS IT?...On the west coast of Africa, just round the 'bulge', and about 2,000 miles from Britain, and about 4 times the size of Gt. Britain.

WHO LIVES THERE?...65,000,000 people of many different national groups (just as a British person may be Welsh Scottish or English), speaking between them around 250 languages including English. The country gained its independence in 1960 and is a federation of 12 States, rather like the U.S.A.

WHAT DO PEOPLE WEAR AND EAT?...School uniform is generally shorts and open-necked shirt for boys and a cotton frock for girls, but out of school many wear traditional Nigerian dress, usually of printed cotton in lovely gay colours. For 'best', lace, nylon and even velvet are worn, by men as well as women.

Nigerian food is HOT! Eye-wateringly, breath-takingly, pepper-hot. Meals vary in different areas, but in the west a typical 'menu' might be:

Breakfast - Corn porridge and fried peppery bean-cakes
Morning Snack - Fried sliced plantain (like a course banana) or roasted peanuts.
Lunch - Boiled yam (very like potato) with meat stewed in thick, orange, palm-oil gravy made with ground-up onions, tomatoes and spinach and - you've guessed? - peppers.
Supper -Boiled rice with small brown beans in (peppery) palm-oil.

People don't care much for sweet food apart from fruit

WHICH RELIGION DO PEOPLE FOLLOW?..Very many are Muslim following the teaching of the Prophet Muhammed. Many others believe that there is one God over everything, but that he is far away from us; that spirits living in trees, rivers, etc., can make things better or worse for human beings. Christians use the name of this over-all God and explain that he is a loving Father and Jesus is his Son. About a tenth of the people are Christians. Churches now have Nigerian Leaders and Pastors.

A MARRIAGE CASUALTY PRAYS

They're more tears of relief, than sadness -
Oh, I'm sad, God, I'm so sad.....
for the silly, silly waste of what might have been:
I'm most sad for the children - how can they
understand?
Care for the children, God, let them not be too hurt..
But at last it was out, I could say it, it was sham.
Like an apple that started with one black spot and
inside getting more and more rotton, but still red
shiny skin...well, still a skin, still together...
Could we have sorted it, God?
Did we ever have a chance?
It started so good, so meant, I thought it would work -
we both thought so, seriously - 'till death us do
part'
I was always afraid we might change, tried not to,
but we have to change, don't we?....and we have to
change together or grow apart.....
Help me straighten things out God: help
me make what is left good.....

*

A PRAYER

We confess that we have broken your word of life;
We have hurt whom we should have loved;
we have neglected what we should have
cherished;
we have forgotton what we had learned;
LORD HAVE MERCY: CHRIST HAVE MERCY.

Name us the names, O God, that we may never forget...
all who have hoped and endured and striven and died..
that your children might have peace and freedom....
Name us the Name that is above every name....
CHRIST HAVE MERCY: CHRIST HAVE MERCY.

... (The Congregational Prayer Fellowship Handbook)

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IT'S PROPER POSH.....

By the time you receive this newsletter the decoration of the lower schoolroom and kitchen should be complete. We invite you to come and inspect our handywork because, though we say it ourselves, we have done a good job. There are a lot of people to thank. Firstly, the "craftsmen" who did the work under the guidance of foreman F. Beattie; then the Women's Guild who contributed to the cost of the schoolroom materials and the Busy Bees, who were responsible for the cost of a new sink unit, work tops and the kitchen floor covering. The improvements include a serving hatch from the kitchen to the schoolroom - that should prove very useful.

THIS WAS ALSO PROPER POSH....

Although it seems a long time since Christmas we would like to thank the Pilots and others who helped to decorate the church and schoolroom for the Christmas festivities. They put in a tremendous amount of work to ensure that everything would be ready for the carol service.

AND THIS WAS PROPER NOISY....

Editor: "How was the pantomime?"

Editor's Parents: "Noisy."

You guessed it. They attended the matinee performance at Oldham Coliseum on New Years Day. So did 49 children and 9 (brave? foolish? masochistic?) teachers who went to watch Mother Goose lay golden eggs. Needless to say there was much participation; everybody wiggled like a wiggly worm and shouted "Oh-yes-you-are" (or was it "Oh-no-your-not"?) The children had a phenomenal time and the teachers had phenomenal headaches.....A teachers meeting will be convened shortly to elect delegates to negotiate with Carl Paulson to ensure that next years panto is "Sleeping Beauty."

WOMEN'S GUILD ON PROBATION

Our own Probation Officer, Mr. Roy Vincent, again addressed the Women's Guild at their January meeting. We were most enlightened by his account of the various projects undertaken by the Probation Staff to assist those in need of help. Mrs. C. Hill thanked him and a collection was taken on behalf of SELCARE about which Mr. Vincent had spoken.

BEST WISHES.....

- To Mr. W. Phipps of Nelson Street who will be 80 on February 7th.
- To Mr. Frank Ingham and Mrs. Mary Jones on their engagement.

.....CONGRATULATIONS!

We wish Mr. C. Binns a speedy recovery from his operation.

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IN THE INTERIM

The North East Manchester district, of which we are part, held a meeting on Friday 5th January, at which it was announced that the appointment of Interim Moderator had now been completed. Readers will have noticed that this month's ministerial letter is from Rev. R.A.C. West who has been appointed Interim Moderator for both our churches. For future reference his address is:

Rev. R.A.C. West M.A.,
19 Egerton Road,
Whitefield.
Tel: 061 766 3013

We wish Mr. West a pleasant association with both our churches.

CHURCH DUTIES - MILNROW

FAMILY WORSHIP DOOR STEWARDS

Feb. 4th	Mr. H. Mellor	Mrs. F. Butterworth
11th	Mr. D. Fursey	Miss M. Wood
18th	Counc. J. Harrison	Counc. I. Royle
25th	Mr. J. Collins	Mrs. A. Collins
Mar, 4th	Mrs. F. Whitworth	Mrs. J. Duffy

ELDERS ROTA
EVENING DOOR STEWARDS

PIANIST/ORGANIST
EVENING WORSHIP

Feb. 4th	Mr. B. Clough	Mrs. C. Hey
11th	Mr. R. Gillon	Mr. J. Emmott
18th	Mr. J. Emmott	Mr. D. Logan
25th	Mr. J. Wild	Mrs. C. Hey
Mar. 4th	Mrs. M. Howarth	Mr. D. Logan

COMMUNION ROTA

Feb. 4th	Mr. J. Wild	Mrs. M. Howarth
18th	Mr. B. Clough	Mr. R. Gillon a.m.
Mar. 4th	Mr. J. Emmott	Mr. A. Roberts

FAMILY CHURCH COFFEE ROTA

Feb. 4th	Mrs. J. Duffy	Mrs. F. Butterworth
11th	Mrs. A. Wood	Mrs. A. Collins
18th	Mrs. H. Whitehead	Mrs. Greenhalgh
25th	Mrs. E. Garside	Mrs. J. Calow
Mar. 4th	Mrs. C. Hey	Mrs. M. Mellor

Persons unable to take their appointments as listed are expected to find a suitable substitute.

Please make every effort to attend Sunday Worship, particularly in the evening - and to observe the Sacraments as listed in the diary.

CHURCH DUTIES - LITTLEBOROUGH

DOOR STEWARDS

Feb.	4th	Mr. B. Hill	Mr. H.N. Hill	
	11th	Mr. F. Beattie	Mrs. B. Hartley	10.30
		Mr. E. Holt	Mr. A. Booth	6.00
	18th	Mrs. E. Crossley	Mr. W. Barker	
	25th	Mr. F. Ingham	Mrs. A. Stott	10.30
Mar.	4th	Mr. J. Hill	Mr. J. Holt	

ELDERS COMMUNION ROTA

Feb.	11th	Mr. J. Nairn	Mr. J. Lord	6.00
	25th	Mr. Simpson	Mr. F. Ingham	10.30

COFFEE ROTA

Feb.	4th	Mrs. W. Spinks	Mrs. J. Hobbs
	11th	Mrs. V. Crossley	Mrs. E. Crawford
	18th	Mrs. K. Hill	Mrs. A. Merrick
	25th	Mrs. J. Law	Mrs. D. Mallinson
Mar.	4th	Mrs. J. Allison	Mrs. B. Leach

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FAMILY CHURCH READINGS; See page 5

Readers:	February 4th	Esther Bennett
	" 11th	Mr. S. Moss
	" 18th	Elizabeth Leach
	" 25th	Mrs. M.G. Hill
	March 4th	Mrs. H. Vincent

ST. STEPHEN'S DIARY

February

Sun.	4th	11.00 am.	Rev. J.B. Hawksworth
		6.00 pm.	" (Service of Word & Sacrament)
Mon.	5th	6.30 pm.	Pilots (and each Monday)
Tues.	6th	7.30 pm.	Women's Guild - Mrs. Ashworth (Genealogy)
Thur.	8th	7.30 pm.	Junior Church Staff Meeting (14 Heaton Street)
Sun.	11th	11.00 am.	Rev. W.J. Else M.A. (Bolton)
		6.00 pm.	Student
Mon.	12th	7.30 pm.	District L.P. Fellowship - Alkrington
Wed.	14th	7.30 pm.	Elders Meeting
Sun.	18th	11.00 am.	Family Worship with Communion
		6.00 pm.	Rev. R. Parker B.A., B.D.
Wed.	21st	8.00 pm.	World Mission Committee - (24 Ladyhouse Close)
Sun.	25th	11.00 am.	To be announced
		6.00 pm.	Rev. R.A.C. West M.A. (Induction/Ordination of Elders)

March

Fri.	2nd		District Meeting at St. Stephen's
Sun.	4th	11.00 am.	Rev. A. Evans (Middleton)
		6.00 pm.	Rev. W. Purvis (Bury) (Service of Word & Sacrament)

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FLOWERS FOR COMMUNION TABLE

Feb.	4th	Miss M. Wood	Mrs. D. Butterworth
	11th	Mrs. F. Holland	Mrs. E. Prince
	18th	Mrs. R. Rothwell	Mrs. F. Butterworth
	25th	Mrs. Kenyon	Mrs. F. Cooper
March	4th	Mrs. E. Smith	Mrs. H. Buckley

NICARAGUAN EARTHQUAKE APPEAL: £5.65 - Many thanks! £3 of this was donated by Senior & Young People's class from proceeds of coffee evening, and balance subscribed at coffee evening held by Mr. & Mrs. Whittaker on 4th January.

LITTLEBOROUGH DIARY

February

Thur. 1st	6.45 pm.	Pilots
Sun. 4th	10.30 am.	Mr. J. Lord
Tues. 6th	7.30 pm.	Women's Guild - Birthday Supper
Thur. 8th	6.45 pm.	Pilots
Sun. 11th	10.30 am.	
	6.00 pm.	Rev. W.J. Else M.A. (Bolton) (Communion)
Tues.13th	7.45 pm.	Junior Church Staff Meeting
Thur.15th	6.45 pm.	Pilots
Sun. 18th	10.30 am.	Mr. J. Lord
Thur.22nd	6.45 pm.	Pilots
	8.00 pm.	Mens Fellowship -Classics on Record.
Sun. 25th	10.30 am.	Mrs. E. Gillon (Family Communion)

March

Thur. 1st	6.45 pm.	Pilots
Sun. 4th	10.30 am.	Mr. J. Lord

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FLOWERS FOR COMMUNION TABLE

Feb. 4th	Mrs. White
11th	Mrs. Greenwood
18th	Mrs. J.A. Leach
25th	Misses Dobson
Mar. 4th	Mrs. E. Jackson

OFFERTORIES

	Cash	Envelopes
December 17th	£10.45	£12.92
24th	3.60	4.26
31st	1.82	12.66
January 7th	1.87½	5.57½
14th	5.86	13.48

CHURCH SECRETARIES:

MILNROW

Mr. Allan Roberts,
54 Beechfield Road,
Milnrow.
Tel: ROCHDALE 42243

LITTLEBOROUGH

Mr. F.G. Simpson,
121 Calderbrook Road,
Littleborough.
Tel: 061 834 4402
(Business)

*

MESSENGER EDITOR:

Counc. Ian Royle B.Sc. (Econ.),
24 Ladyhouse Close,
Milnrow.
Tel: ROCHDALE 41916

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HOSPITAL VISITORS

MILNROW: Miss M. Wood
Mrs. A. Wood
Mrs. E. Starkie
Miss A. Memory

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